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TO: **Examiner Bradley B. Bayat – USPTO**

FROM: Trent Kirk

APPL. NO. 09/729,051 - Filed December 4, 2000 - AFTER FINAL

REPLY BRIEF

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Attorney's Docket No. 047138/257581

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PATENT

In The United States Patent And Trademark Office

Appl. No.: 09/729,051 Confirmation No.: 4545
Applicant(s): Glen G. Bingham, et al.
Filed: December 4, 2000
Art Unit: 3621
Examiner: Bradley B. Bayat
Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD OF RESERVING
MEETING FACILITY RESOURCES

Docket No.: 047138/257581
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REPLY BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.193

Applicants appreciate the thorough review of the Appeal Brief as evidenced by the Examiner's Answer. Applicants also appreciate that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, have been withdrawn. In light of the Examiner's Answer, Applicants submit rebuttal arguments to address the remaining rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as well as clarify arguments previously submitted in the Appeal Brief.

Claims 1-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,446,045 to Stone ("Stone") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,798. With reference to independent Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28 and the Grounds of Rejection in the Examiner's Answer, the Examiner indicates that Stone discloses receiving a reservation request for a meeting package from a user and reserving a plurality of meeting facility resources in response to receiving the reservation request. The Examiner acknowledges that Stone does not disclose defining a meeting package including a plurality of meeting facility resources, where the meeting facility resources include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility. However, referring to the Examiner's Response to Argument, the Examiner relies on both Stone and Carter as disclosing this particular recitation of Claims 1-28. The Examiner cites to the specification of the present application to state that the definition of meeting facility resources of a meeting package includes "hotel guest

In re: Glen G. Bingham, et al.
Appl No.: 09/729,051
Filing Date: December 4, 2000
Page 2

rooms, meeting rooms, or food or beverage service.” The Examiner then relies on an excerpt from Stone that lists various fields (*e.g.*, room descriptions, room photos, meeting and reception services offered, meeting rooms) that a seller may include in a Presentation Database for presenting to potential buyers (*See* Col. 17, lines 17-25) to allege that Stone discloses meeting facility resources. Furthermore, the Examiner relies upon Carter as disclosing meeting facility resources. In particular, the Examiner relies on the fact that Carter expresses the need for assembling various elements to meet the specifications of the user requesting a complex package of multiple products or services to facilitate the complete package” (Col. 6, lines 3-13).

Not only does the Examiner appear to contradict himself in the Examiner’s Answer by first admitting Stone does not disclose defining a meeting package including a plurality of meeting facility resources having a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility and then finding that Stone does disclose this recitation in the Response to Argument, but the Examiner also fails to recognize in the Response to Argument that independent Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28 specifically define meeting facility resources to include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility. In other words, by looking to the specification instead of the claims, the Examiner is incorrectly reading a broader definition of meeting facility resources into the claims. Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28 require that meeting facility resources include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility, not just a hotel guest room, meeting room, or food or beverage service. Thus, both a meeting room and a guest room are necessarily part of the meeting facility resources.

Stone nowhere teaches or suggests defining a meeting package that includes meeting facility resources, where the meeting facility resources include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility. In fact, where Stone discusses making a reservation, as opposed to simply presenting the information to a buyer, Stone only discloses making a reservation for a specific lodging facility and room type for requested dates (*See* Col. 35, lines 36-62). Thus, Stone only discloses reserving a specific type of room, but does not teach or suggest that this is both a guest room and a meeting room. There is simply no suggestion or motivation within Stone to modify the reservation process to create a meeting package that includes both a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility, as recited in independent Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28. Stone is not

In re: Glen G. Bingham, et al.
Appl No.: 09/729,051
Filing Date: December 4, 2000
Page 3

directed to meeting and event planning and would not have a need for such a meeting package definition.

Similarly, Carter does not disclose a meeting package that includes a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility. In the Examiner's Grounds of Rejection, the Examiner relies on Carter's ability to define and analyze a plurality of inter-related "sub-requests" in order to coordinate a reservation package. The Examiner seems to be relying on the broad statements made in Carter that the intelligent agent could arrange various elements of travel planning to organize a complete package for the consumer, and that this could be interpreted to imply that the intelligent agent could define a meeting package including meeting facility resources having both meeting and guest rooms, as recited by independent Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28. However, Carter does not teach or suggest that the intelligent agent is capable of meeting or event planning, where a meeting package including a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility would be required. Carter simply provides an intelligent agent with the capability to carry out online commerce on behalf of a consumer, and nowhere indicates a need for group planning where meeting and guest rooms would be necessary. In fact, Carter does not mention meeting or event planning at all, and whether the meeting or event planning is carried out by an intelligent agent is irrelevant to the claims of the present application. Assuming that Carter could provide a meeting package including meeting and guest rooms would be incorrectly relying on Carter for a proposition that is not taught or suggested by Carter.

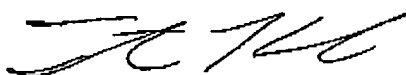
The Examiner's Answer also indicates that Applicant's arguments against the references individually cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. However, Applicants have considered Stone and Carter, both individually and in combination, and neither teaches or suggests defining or requesting a meeting package of meeting facility resources that include both a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility. Thus, even if Stone and Carter are combined, each and every element of independent Claims 1, 14, 21, and 28 is not shown by Stone and/or Carter.

As such, it is apparent that neither Stone nor Carter, taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest defining a meeting package including a plurality of meeting facility resources, where the meeting facility resources include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility, as

In re: Glen G. Bingham, et al.
Appl No.: 09/729,051
Filing Date: December 4, 2000
Page 4

recited by independent Claims 1, 14, and 21. Similarly, neither Stone nor Carter teach or suggest receiving meeting facility criteria and a reservation request for a meeting package including a plurality of meeting facility resources, where the meeting facility resources include a meeting room and a guest room of a meeting facility, recited by independent Claim 28. For the forgoing reasons as well as for the additional reasons set forth in the Appeal Brief, Applicants submit that the rejections of Claims 1-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are overcome.

Respectfully submitted,

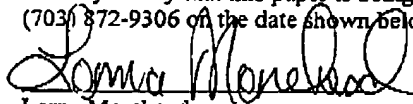


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